To Levi Woodbury, Esq.

1835 (?)

Sir:

I inclose you a pulication of a certain incendiary production, if it be called Human Right. I do this, as Secretary of the Committee of Vigelance of Prince William's Parish, in accordance with a resolution to molest, as far as in us lies, the agents, aiders and abettors of that Fanatic Association, which has taken the liberty, without our consent, and against our inclination, and at our own expense, to force upon us their base and incendiary papers, to instigate revolt among a more than barbarous people; to light the torch of a servile war; to sharpen the knife of domestic assassination; and to plunge the South into all the horrors of midnight conflagration, bloodshed, and depredation. The pulication sent to you contains the Report of a Speech delivered by yourself. As I took up my pen with the purpose of answering it; but almost despair of succeeding. It is such a puerile production; such a jargon of mere words & phrases, containing the fewest possible ideas that could well be collected into connected sentence; so much like what we would expect from a second-rate Pedagogue attempting to gain for the purpose of abusing the public confidence, by pandering to their passions; that a Southern boy of 12 would have well deserved the application of the birch, for the perpetration of so childish and contemptible an article. It is mostly made up with the statement of pretended facts, which, garbled and perverted, until under the operation of anti-slavery ingenuity, they bear but slight impressions of the original. These things, told by the blinded and deluded creatures whom you have drawn in to countenance your nefarious purposes, and who have never been within the limits of a Slaveholding State, might be excused, though not justified, as the result of culpable ignorance; but when related by a man who has travelled through a Slaveholding Country, has seen with his own eyes, ~~contrad~~ daily contradictions of his barefaced assertions, no course remains for us but to believe, despite the suggestions of charity, that he has been guilty of palpable and conscious falsehood. If we upon first ~~[illegible]~~ remark, you say that slavery

is the "holding men as property, chattels & not human beings; not such treatment as some suppose." Now I would ask of Mr Woodbury, which is worse, the holding men as property by legal enactments, & the retaining them as such, in effect, without the sanction of law, and in direct contradiction to its forms? — Property signifies the right to the possession of the thing; which cannot be had without the enjoyment of the profits: hence, if the enjoyment of the property is by force, no matter whether that force be mental or physical, no matter whether the means be the whip or the fear of starvation, it is, in amount, the possession of the thing, & is just as property in the subject. A Slave then, according to my idea of the matter, is one who must work for another, at the Employer's own price, during a time named by him, and under the fear of a penalty.

I send you, enclosed, an account of some Slaves, much nearer home than your Black Brethren, headed, "Factory Children." These Children, you perceive, are compelled to work 14 hours in the day, & also to Starve for the pittance of something less than $2. per week. And another fact, shocking to Southern feelings; you commence working your Slaves at (7) seven years of age; what Planter at the South would think of such cruelty, to work a fellow-being, only seven years old, 14 hours of the day? — A Negro at the South never commences work before he is 10 or 12 years of age, and at no time of his life works more than 12 hours of the day.

I make no further comment upon your precious system of Slavery, without the means, and pass on to the (I fear fruitless) attempt

V5 P44

44a US p44a

of hunting out something else in your effusion, bearing the appearance of argument:-

¶ "not allowed to be taught even in a Sabbath School"

¶ This is a most glaring, palpable, positive falsehood. In this very place, and it is not confined to this place, there is a regular Sabbath School for the young ones, and the Pastor devotes a portion of Sunday to the exclusive instruction of the Colored portion of his ~~population~~ congregation. A regular and connected plan for the employment of Missionaries in this instruction, in this State and Georgia, has been for some time being digested; but it fiendy rejoices, that the conduct of you, Bloodhounds, will stay for a time these projected schemes of benevolence. I hope not; I hope the Southern people will not suffer themselves to be driven from the performance of their duty towards those whom Providence has placed under their care, by the movements and efforts of Northern Incendiaries.

¶ "We tried to keep still, but I can't keep still- I won't keep still- I don't, I won't." ¶ Beautiful sublime effusion, uttered the noble feelings which actuated the Eloquent Orator! Masterpiece of eloquence! What lofty inventory must have dictated its utterance! What energetic language! What stern determination! What nerve! what an improvement upon the vehement Athenian! Certainly, Demosthenes would have blushed in conscious superiority, had his last philippic been placed in

Comparison with the heroics of the Woodbury
¶ I have not patience to remark further upon
your rant. I can find nothing more, having
any resemblance to argument. All the rest
appears to be a tissue of falsehood and fustian,
calculated only to excite and gratify the
bloodthirsty appetite of those whom you
addressed. Before I read your speech, I did
think that most of you were actuated
by a mistaken sense of duty, and benev-
olence misdirected. But after perusing the
pitiful and puerile rant now before me, I
felt convinced that it is another, in some
nefarious and hidden purpose, to undea-
vouring to inflame the populace, by joining
in, and echoing in louder strains, the popu-
lar cry of ignorant fanaticism.
¶ Now, sir, be assured whatever may be the motive
which actuates you, there is but one feeling at the
South; and that is, an unshaken determination to
retain and defend their property, at any and every
hazard; and should your party increase rapidly,
at once to seek the union, and bid defiance to your
vain and futile efforts. ¶ In the mean time, you can-
not suppose that the South will quietly submit
her borders to be invaded by the agents of a Bloody
Fraternity, inundated by the insurrectionary and
inflammatory productions of men whose only aim
would seem to be to gratify an
and slaughter; and her slaves to be instigated to the
horrible excesses which marked the revolt of
St Domingo. No, sir, if the Law is not strong enough
to protect us, the only alternative left is to protect
ourselves; and the late reflections of well merit-

=ed justice in the State of Mississippi sufficiently point out the manner in which retribution will be meted out to you. The populas cry here, already, is to inflict justice upon all the agents of a Society, whose aims and ends have been (alas! for human nature) too plainly developed in the plot and horrible scheme of a Mantle, and the pervading attempts of the Steam Doctors, whose skill, however preternatural, proved ineffectual to avert the anger of the people when roused to the exertion of their energies. Upon this pervade, by an advertisement which I enclose, that all your agents in the State stand upon a ticklish foundation; for be assured, that should any such be detected, there would be but little a slight chance of his escaping Mississippian justice. Lynch's Law originated in S Carolina some time during the revolution and I rather think the first inventor would be but little behind hand in inducing their perfect acquaintance with the first principles of popular Justice.

Should it be thought fit (as is not unlikely) to offer Rewards for the abduction of the leading men who are thirsting for our blood, I think Mr Woodbury would command a price quite tempting to the genius of Yankee Speculation, and that some of the kindhearted and benevolent sons of the Pilgrim Fathers would soon display the characteristic emotion of the Land of Steady Habits, by turning their ingenuity to the vending more profitable notions than wooden nutmegs and horn flints in the persons of Your Lappany, Garrison & Woodbury=

but may be mistaken, and would be loath to include any gentleman among you who was innocent of such atrocity. You will, I suppose, refuse to grant this request but must pay the postage.

W. Ferguson Hutton,
Sec. of the V. C. of Dr. Valley

1 50.

William L. Garrison Esq
Boston
Mass

Mail

Postmaster, N.
August 25

Mr. William L. Garrison will oblige us by forwarding this letter to that Mr Woodbury, who delivered a Speech before the Anti-Slavery Soc. of New-Hampshire at Concord; which wise production was published in the Human Rights We suppose it to be Levi Woodbury.